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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IO-13 DPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 18871

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: SOUTH VIETNAMESE "THIRD FORCE" CONTACTS WITH PRG AND GVN

REF: PARIS 18363

BEGIN SUMMARY. SOUTH VIETNAMESE "THIRD FORCE" FIGURE (HO THONG MINH) EXPLAINED TO EMBOFF THE BACKGROUND OF THE JULY 7 MEETING BETWEEN "THIRD FORCE" LEADERS AND THE HEAD OF THE PRG DELEGATION NGUYEN VAN HIEU. MINH LAMENTED LACK OF GVN RESPONSE TO SIMULTANEOUS DEMARCHE. MINH ASKED WHETHER US HAD ANY SUGGESTIONS TO MAKE TO HIM PRIOR TO DINNER WITH HIEU JULY 12. END SUMMARY.

1. SOUTH VIETNAMESE "THIRD FORCE" FIGURE, HO THONG MINH, CALLED ON EMBOFF TO EXPLAIN RECENT CONTACTS WITH PRG AND GVN LEADERS IN PARIS. ACCORDING TO MINH, ON JULY 4 A GROUP OF "THIRD FORCE" ORGANIZATIONS LOOSELY FEDERATED UNDER THE NAME OF "COMMITTEE FOR EACE AND DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES IN SOUTH VIETNAM" SENT LETTERS TO HEAD OF THE PRG DELEGATION (NGUYEN VAN HIEU) AND HEAD OF THE GVN DELEGATION (NGUYEN LUU VIEN). THE LETTERS PROPOSED MEETINGS BETWEEN THE COMMITTEE AND THE GVN AND PRG REPRESENTATIVES. ON JULY 6, THE PRG REPRESENTATIVE PROPOSED A MEETING ON JULY 7, AND THE COMMITTEE MET AND EXCHANGED VIEWS WITH
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THE PRG (AFP JULY 9 REPORT COVERED THE MEETING AND THE COMMITTEE'S

COMMUNIQUE ON THE MEETING IS BEING FORWARDED BY AIR POUCH.)
MINH SAID THAT THEY HAD STILL HAD NO RESPONSE FROM THE GVN
REPRESENTATIVE, BUT HE INTENDE TO CALL VIEN SHORTLY.

2. MIN SAID THAT THE "COMMITTEE FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRATIC
LIBERTIES IN SOUTH VIETNAM" HAD BEEN FORMED OUT OF A GREAT
VARIETY OF VIETNAMESE ORGANIZATIONS IN FRANCE. HIS GROUP
(LIAISON COMMITTEE OF THE CENTRIST FORCES OF SOUTH VIETNAM)
HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN EFFECTING THE FORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE
BECAUSE IT HAD REMOVED THE PRINCIPAL STUMBLING BLOCK WHEN IT
OBTAINED THE EXCLUSION OF THE SOCIETY F VIETNAMESE RESIDENTS
IN FRANCE AS TOO CLOSE AND OBVIOUS A PUPPET OF THE
PRG. MINH COMMENTED THAT THE COMMITTEE CONTINUED TO HAVE AN
EXCESSIVELY LEFTIST FLAVOR, AND HE THOUGHT THAT THE EVOLUTION
WOULD BE IN A MORE REASONABLE DIRECTION AS THE MOVEMENT
ACQUIRED GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES. MINH SAID THAT
BECAUSE OF THE VARIETY OF PARTICIPANTS, THERE WAS NO LEADER
OF THE COMMITTEE, BUT H THOUGHT THAT EVENTUALLY THICH
THIEN CHAU (ASSOCIATION OF OVERSEAS VIETNAMESE BUDDHISTS)
WOULD BECOME THE RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL LEADER AND HE (MINH)
WOULD BECOME THE POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC LEADER.

3. MINH SAID THAT HE CONTINUED TO REGRET THE LACK OF
RESPONSIVENESS ON THE PART OF THE GVN. HE HAD TALKED
WITH DR. TRAN VAN DO AND PARTICULARLY WITH NGUYEN NGOC
HUY, BUT TO DATE THERE HAD BEEN NO INDICATION ON ANY
SOFTENING OF SAIGON'S POSITION VIS-A-VIS THE "THIRD
FORCE." MINH HOPED THAT THE GVN MIGHT SOON REALIZE THE
NECESSITY OF SOME POLITICAL COMPROMISE AND AGREE TO
ACCEPT A VISIT FROM NGUYEN DE (SEE REFTEL) O WORK OUT
A ROLE FOR THE "THIRD FORCE" ELEMENTS
IN SOUTH VIETNAM AND ABROAD. MINH THOUGHT THAT
INDICATIONS OF ACCEPTANCE OF SOME "THIRD FORCE" LEADERS
BY THE US AND DRV MIGHT INDICATE FORCEFULLY TO PRESIDENT
THEIU THAT HE SHOULD DEAL WITH THE "THIRD FORCE" AS ONE
OF THE ELEMENTS INVOLVED IN THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD, AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE JANUARY PARIS AGREEMENTS.

4. MINH SAID THAT HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH THE DRV LEADERS
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HAD MADE IT CLEAR TO HIM THAT AN ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL
EVOLUTION IN SOUTH VIETNAM WAS AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF
THE DRV WILLINGNESS TO ABIDE BY OTHER PARIS AGREEMENT
PROVISIONS CONCERNING INDOCHINA. UNTIL SVN POLITICAL
DEVELOPMENTS WERE ON A GOOD PATH, MINH DID NOT BELIEVE
THAT THE DRV WOULD PERMIT THE RESOLUTION OF THE LAOS
AND CAMBODIAN PROBLEMS.

5. MINH SAID THAT HE HAD BEEN INVITED FOR DINNER ALONE WITH PRG REPRESENTATIVE HIEU ON JULY 12; IF THE US HAD ANY VIEWS OF WHICH HE SHOULD BE AWARE BEFORE THIS DINNER, HE WOULD APPRECIATE BEING INFORMED. EMBOFF REPEATED THE USUAL POSITION THAT THE US BELIEVED INTERNAL SOUTH VIETNAMESE PROBLEMS SHOULD BE SOLVED BY THE SOUTH VIETNAMESE THEMSELVES, AND US FAVORED A SITUATION IN WHICH THERE WOULD BE THE LEAST OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE. MINH SAID THAT IN ANY CASE HE WOULD INFORM EMBOFF JULY 13 IF ANYTHING DEVELOPED IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH HIEU.

6. IF DEPT OR SAIGON BELIEVE WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE MINH BY INDICATING ANY US VIEWS PRIOR TO HIS CONTACT WITH PRG, WE WOULD APPRECIATE A CABLE BEFORE COG JULY 12.
IRWIN

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